

NEA News

NEA presents highlights from arts-participation study

How do Americans participate in the arts in the course of a year? What kinds of art forms and activities do they engage with, and in what numbers?

The NEA investigated these questions and more in the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), the nation's largest population survey of arts participation trends. An initial report of the survey's findings was released in September, and a comprehensive report will be available in 2014.

"One of the most important things we can do as the National Endowment for the Arts is to understand how our nation engages with the arts," said NEA Senior Deputy Chairman Joan Shigekawa. "This iteration of the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is our most comprehensive look yet at the myriad ways art works for Americans."

A yardstick for arts engagement

The NEA has partnered with the United States Census Bureau six times since 1982 to conduct the SPPA. The 2012 survey asked a nationally representative sample of adults ages 18 and older if they had participated in five broad categories of arts activity in the past year: attending, reading, learning, making/sharing art, and consuming art via electronic media.

For the 2012 survey, the NEA doubled the sample size in order ask more questions, developed through dialogues with researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the arts, and discover new patterns of arts engagement. Since the survey captures more art forms, it also captures more people who are participating in the arts.

Key findings

This initial analysis of the 2012 SPPA shows that large segments of the U.S. adult population reported taking part in at least one kind of arts activity. A closer look at the data reveals subtle shifts in demographic and behavioral patterns that occurred since 2008, the previous survey year.

Art and electronic media

More than two-thirds of American adults (71 percent or 167 million) accessed art via electronic media, including TV, radio, handheld or mobile devices, the internet, and DVDs, CDs, tapes or records.

Music viewing and/or listening is the most popular form of media arts participation – whether on TV, radio or the internet. Fifty percent of adults used TV or radio to watch or listen to music, and 29 percent used the internet to watch, listen to, or download music.

Mobile devices appear to narrow racial/ethnic gaps in arts engagement. Whether listening to music, looking at a photo, or watching a dance or theater performance, all racial/ethnic groups show roughly the same rates of engagement via mobile devices.

Attending arts events and activities

Nearly half of the nation's adults (49 percent or 115 million) attended at least one type of visual or performing arts activity. Fifty-nine percent of adults attended at least one movie, an activity that increased substantially among most demographic subgroups.

Musical play attendance saw the first significant drop since the 1985 survey: a 9 percent rate of decline from 2008 to 2012. Non-musical play attendance fell at a 12 percent rate over the same period. Museum-going also saw a decline: 21 percent of adults (or 47 million) visited an art museum or gallery in 2012, down from 23 percent in 2008.

Non-white and Hispanic Americans saw no declines in their arts attendance rates from 2008 to 2012; on the contrary, they even saw increases in some categories. In 2012, African Americans outpaced whites' attendance rates at jazz events.

Festivals show promise as entry points to the arts. One in four younger adults (ages 18-24) attended an outdoor performing arts festival in 2012, up from 22 percent in 2008.

Art-making and art-sharing

About half of the nation's adults created, performed, or shared art of various types. Social dancing is the most popular form of art-making or art-sharing; nearly one in three adults (32 percent) danced at weddings, clubs or other social settings. Young adults and Hispanic Americans are the most avid dancers; 40 percent of 18-34 year olds and 36 percent of Hispanics reported social dancing.

One in four adults (26 percent) e-mailed, posted, or shared photography in 2012. One in five adults (21 percent) e-mailed, posted, or shared music. Fifteen percent shared their own photos, and 13 percent shared film or videos. Thirteen percent did photo editing, and 12 percent did photography for artistic purposes.

In this category, the fiber arts were among the most popular. Thirteen percent of adults reported participating in weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, knitting, or sewing in 2012. Twelve percent of adults played a musical instrument. Nine percent reported singing, either alone or with others, and 8 percent created leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork.

Reading books and literature

More than half of American adults read a work of literature or a book (fiction or nonfiction) not required for work or school. However, adults' rates of literary reading (novels or short stories, poetry, and plays) dropped back to 2002 levels (from 50 percent in 2008 to 47 percent in 2012).

Older Americans (65 and older) now have higher rates of literary reading than any other adult age group.

Arts education

As of 2012, roughly half of all adults had experienced some arts learning at some point in their lives, whether through classes or lessons, in or out of school, or outside of formal instruction. But disparities persist by gender, race/ethnicity, and level of general education.

For example, a college graduate is nearly twice as likely to have taken an art class or lesson in childhood than a high school graduate (59 percent compared to 32 percent). Meanwhile, adults of all racial and ethnic backgrounds reported similar rates of taking arts classes or lessons in the last year.

The most popular classes adults reported taking in childhood (in or out of school) were voice training or playing an instrument (36 percent), visual arts (19 percent), and art appreciation or art history (18 percent).

A new, more inclusive question about arts education reveals more arts participants than before. Fifty-six percent of adults reported that they received arts education at some point in their lives – whether through classes, lessons, or through informal instruction (from friends, family tradition, or teaching oneself). This compares to the 49 percent who reported having taken formal instruction (a class or lesson, in or out of school) at some point in their lives.

The most popular informal learning experiences were voice training or playing an instrument (18 percent), dance (16 percent), photography or filmmaking (13 percent), and music appreciation (11 percent).

Next year, the NEA will release a full report with in-depth findings including more geographic and demographic details for arts engagement among U.S. adults. Beyond the highlights report, the entire survey questionnaire, raw data, and user's guide are available to researchers and the public at arts.gov.

The SPPA Challenge:

Presenting arts data artfully

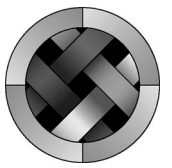
Big data presents big challenges, and the SPPA is no exception. Consequently, the NEA is issuing a challenge to researchers, academics, and the media to create interactive visualization tools to make the 2012 SPPA more accessible to the public.

More than \$20,000 will be awarded to select contestants; learn more at Challenge.gov.

NEA Art Works:

Research grants available

The SPPA and its host survey instrument, the Current Population Survey, include a wealth of demographic information that can be mined for detailed characteristics of arts participants. Researchers are encouraged to analyze the SPPA through the NEA Research: Art Works grant program; for information, email nearesearchgrants@arts.gov.



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Details on Western Art Week events due by Jan. 2

The Great Falls Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) has selected Western Art Week in March 2014 to receive a \$30,000 grant for special promotion of this event.

"Western Art Week is one of the best arts and cultural happenings in Great Falls," said Robert Dompier, TBID chair. "It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate Charlie Russell's 150th birthday in 2014 and for the lodging properties to say 'thank you' to everyone involved in Western Art Week for bringing overnight guests to Great Falls for all these years."

The goal of this project is to bring everything – logistically, thematically and emotionally – about the Western Art Week experience together into one coherent marketing piece.

The TBID is developing an all-inclusive website that will include information from the largest signature events, shows and auctions, to the smaller niche shows and artist gatherings.

To accomplish this, the TBID invites artists, event and show organizers to log onto www.westernartweek.com and fill out the information form by Jan. 2.

For information, call 406-868-5989 or email director@gftourismbid.com.

Maestro Scott explores "Arts in the Economy"

Maestro Allan R. Scott, music director of the Helena Symphony, steps up to a different kind of podium in January when he teaches "The Arts in the Economy" at Helena College UM. The 32-hour course explores how the arts make a significant impact in the economy, with an emphasis on Montana.

Topics include job creation, taxes generated by the arts, direct and indirect effects on national and local economies, and how the economic impact of the arts has helped shaped public policy and corporate decision-making.

The course also examines how the economic impact of the arts influences social, cultural, educational, and political factors in communities. Community, corporate, political and arts leaders will share insights during the weekly lectures and discussions.

"The key is to have actual, meaningful



Allan R. Scott (Photo by Allen S. Lefohn)

relevant information, using Montana as the key state to study throughout the semester," says Scott.

As the Helena Symphony's longest serving music director, Maestro Scott is recognized as an authority on the economic, political, cultural, and educational impact that the arts have on a community. In addition to his international conducting career, he regularly speaks to corporate and political leaders on the value of the arts.

The course is available to continuing education students and current undergraduates, especially in the areas of economics and small business administration. Class size is limited to 24 students.

The class meets from 6-9 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 21-March 18 (no class March 11), and noon-4 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 8 and March 8. Cost is \$196.50 (additional fees may apply if taken for college credit).

For more information, call 406-447-6946 or visit www.umhelena.edu/continuing.